

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

12-63F Orleans G EAS.1326
LHD 5.12.1986, NRDIS 3.2.2001

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Old Town Center

Photograph



2017 Assessor Photo

Locus Map



Address: 3070 State Highway

Historic Name: John and Lurana Smith House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1831

Source: Title research, vital records

Style/Form: Federal/ Three-quarter Cape

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
Shed

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
None on record

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.56 acres

Setting: The house is situated at the corner of the State Highway and Nauset Road. The surrounding area includes historic properties, summer cottage development, and civic and commercial buildings. The driveway is accessed from Preservation Way which loops north of this parcel. The house is largely obscured from the State Highway by mature plantings.

Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

3070 STATE HIGHWAY

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

G

EAS.1326

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The Smith-Brewer House, built ca. 1831, is a Federal-style Cape. The front elevation is four bays wide with an off-centered entrance typical of the Three-quarter Cape form. The main block has a high stud wall, allowing for higher floor heights on the first floor and/or attic level. In addition to the main block, there is a small addition at the northwest corner of the house. The house rests on a stone foundation. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (wood shingles originally), and a narrow, brick chimney rises in alignment with the front entrance. The front entrance surround is the primary ornamental feature characteristic of the Federal style with its pilasters (flat columns) and transom lights above the door. The door has multiple vertically-stacked panels (a door style that became popular in the late-19th century). Fenestration consists of wood, 9/6, single-glazed windows set in molded surrounds. These windows may either be original or early windows – they use a muntin pattern that was employed for the Federal style.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

(Edited and expanded from 2020 Form B for 1 Preservation Way, EAS.34, which mistakenly identified that former barn as this main house.)

Title research tracks back to an 1838 deed where Joseph and Lurana Smith of Eastham sold a five-acre parcel at the intersection of the County and Nauset Roads that included this land.¹ That deed referenced a dwelling house that likely refers to this house. There are two deeds wherein Joseph Smith, a farmer, bought land in Eastham, but neither appears to conform to or include this land, so it is unclear when he purchased this land.

Of all the Smiths in Eastham, this Joseph Smith is among the most obscure. The deed is signed by him and his wife Lurania H. Smith. Lurania Higgins Steel was born in Winchester, NH, to the Rev. Joel Steel and his wife Jerusha Rich Higgins, the latter of whom was a native of Wellfleet. In Eastham in 1831, she married Joseph Smith, and though no deed has been located that transferred property to him, he probably built the house that is now 3070 State Highway at the time of his marriage. It is highly likely that the five-acre parcel was farmed. The couple had two sons in Eastham, George W. in 1835 and Joseph W. in 1837. By 1840, the family had moved to Natick, where Joseph Smith, a clock maker, died of consumption in 1847. His birthplace is listed as Eastham, but his parents' names were left blank.²

¹ Book 8/ Page 210.

² The Smiths had two more children in Natick, Maria Curtis in 1840 and Frances Ella in 1845. In 1850 the widowed Lurania Smith lived with her four children, her mother Jerusha R. Steel, and boarders in Natick. In 1859 son Joseph W., an upholsterer, married Maria Menard in Boston,

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

3070 STATE HIGHWAY

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

G

EAS.1326

The Smiths sold this house and five acres in 1838 to James G. Smith, merchant from Dennis, and George Ward of Wellfleet. They may have bought this house as an investment. James Smith appears to have sold his interest to George Ward. It was George alone in 1847, described as a gentleman still living in Wellfleet, who sold this property to Reuben Brewer, mariner.³

Reuben Brewer (1815-1904) may have been renting this house; he was listed in this neighborhood in the 1840 Eastham census, i.e. before he bought this house, with two persons in his household. Brewer was one of the five children of North Carolina-native Edward Brewer (ca 1780-1820) and his wife Mehitable Mayo Brewer (1784-1864). He was a mariner when he married Ruth Snow of Orleans early in 1847, which may have prompted the decision to buy this house. By 1850, the couple were listed with \$406 in real property in a household with two-year-old daughter Almena Lewis Brewer (b. 1848), and Brewer's mother. In 1859, son Luther Wilber was born. In 1865, Ruth Snow Brewer died of typhoid, and from 1865 through 1880, the household included Reuben, by 1870 a fisherman, Almena, and Luther, who by 1880 was an apprentice to a harness maker.

In 1882, daughter Almena had a daughter, Blanche Allen, in Brockton (the birth is also listed in Eastham); the father is listed as John W. Brewer, of whom little has been learned; but he was never part of the Eastham Brewer household. By 1900, son Luther had left the household, Reuben Brewer was farming, daughter Almena was a laundress, and granddaughter Blanche was eighteen. In 1902, the town taxed (but exempted) Brewer for a house valued at \$450, a barn at \$50, a shop at \$40, a woodhouse at \$20, and a henhouse at \$40, and an unspecified amount of land. Reuben Brewer died in July 1904, and in November of the same year the *Barnstable Patriot* reported that Almena and Blanche "have closed their house and gone to Brockton for the winter."

In 1905, Almena rented her father's house for the summer, but she and her daughter were back in Eastham in the fall, when Blanche was one of several Eastham young women who had picked cranberries on the "Brett Bog."⁴ Through the 1910s, she apparently continued to have rented out this house, as Cape newspapers reported her visits to her cousin Bertha and Bertha's husband William B. Higgins, and sometimes kept house for them.⁵ An undated postcard in the Eastham Historical Society documents that she ran the house as the "Hotel Almena." An early-20th century view of State Highway shows this house in the background, and shows its context across from the former Town Hall, 55 Salt Pond Road, EAS.112 (Photo 4).

In 1907, Blanche Brewer, then working as a stitcher at a Brockton shoe factory, married Joseph L. Keefe, a shoe shop cutter born in Boston and living in Brockton. In 1910, they were living in Brockton with one-year-old daughter Bertha Ellen Keefe and Blanche's mother Almena, who was working as a housekeeper. In 1915, Joseph Keefe, reportedly despondent at losing his job, took his life, and by 1920 Almena, Blanche, and her daughter Bertha had returned to this house. In that year Almena was doing laundry from home, and Blanche worked as a boardinghouse waitress. In 1926, Eastham taxed Brewer on a house valued at \$1150, a barn and shed at \$230, a shop at \$115, and 16 acres.

Bertha A. Keefe graduated from Orleans High School in 1927 and went to Hyannis Normal School. By January 1930, she was an assistant in the Eastham school when she began to work with Ellyn Gross, who had recently married and intended to resign within the month. Gross taught first-graders, and Bertha Keefe taught first- and second-graders in Orleans through at least 1941. In 1930 she, her mother Blanche, by then also teaching school, and her grandmother were living here. In 1937, the town taxed Almena Brewer on a house assessed at \$1200, a barn/shed at \$230, a shop at \$120, a 3.6-acre homestead lot, and 5.4 acres of woodland. In 1940, Brewer was ninety-one years old and living at 3070 State Highway with daughter Blanche, by then a town librarian, and granddaughter Bertha.

Almena Lewis Brewer died in 1941, and in 1966, Bertha Keefe registered the land in Land Court and recorded a plan (Figure 2).⁶ She divided her property into five lots in 1984, with the house and barn (now 1 Preservation Way, EAS.34) both on Lot 1. In 1986, Lot 1 was sold to Florence H. and Michael Andras of Easton, CT.⁷ Lot 1 was subdivided in 1987 into Lot 6 with the former barn

and by 1860 and 1865 most of the family is listed in Boston, with between two and six boarders; Jerusha Steel was part of the household in both censuses. Lurania Steel Smith died in Boston in 1883.

³ Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Book 41/ Page 356.

⁴ "Eastham," *Barnstable Patriot*, 28 November 1904, 4; 24 July 1905, 4; and 30 October 1905.

⁵ See, for example, "North Eastham," *Barnstable Patriot*, 7 September 1914, 3. Bertha Howard Brewer (1879-1933) was the daughter of Jesse E. and Rosaltha Ellis Brewer and granddaughter of Edward Brewer (1809-81), Reuben Brewer's brother.

⁶ Certificate of Title 40903, Land Court Plan 34450-A.

⁷ Certificate of Title 108806.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

3070 STATE HIGHWAY

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

G

EAS.1326

and Lot 7 with this house (Figures 3, 4).⁸ In 1996, Florence Andras sold just Lot 7 with this house to Sarah S. Dinsmore of North Truro.⁹ Dinsmore sold it to Julie Christiansen of Meriden, CT in 1999, and in 2008 Christiansen, by then married, transferred the title to herself and her husband Peter Allegra.¹⁰ They remain the owners of record.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Barnstable County Registry of Deeds. Deeds, Land Court Records, and Subdivision Maps.

Barnstable Patriot Archives. Sturgis Library Digital Newspaper Archive,
<https://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/APA/Sturgis/#panel=home>.

Dunham's 1929 Eastham (Mass.) Street Directory.

Eastham Historical Society collections.

Grigas, Stephen J. *Samoset Road-Cape Cod-USA*. Worcester: Miles Press, 2009.

Jenkins, Candace. Old Town Center National Register Historic District Nomination, 2001.

Larson Fisher. Massachusetts Historical Commission Building Form. 1 Preservation Way, 2020.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. "Reconnaissance Survey Report: Eastham." Typescript, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, 1984.

Town of Eastham Tax Commitment Books. 1902-57.

United States Geological Survey. Aerial Survey 1938-2020,

<https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/cape-cod-chronology-viewer/>.

www.ancestry.com - Vital records.

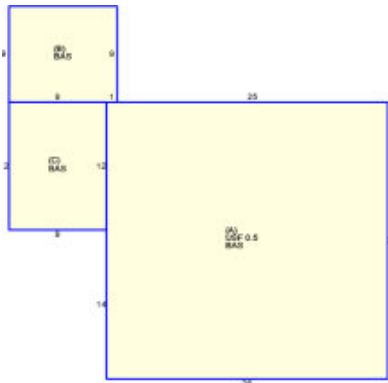


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View looking north (2009 Assessor photo).

⁸ Subdivision Plan of Land in Eastham, Land Court Plan 34450-B, C.

⁹ Certificate of Title 140896.

¹⁰ Certificates of Title 155230, 186296.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

3070 STATE HIGHWAY

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

G	EAS.1326
---	----------



Photo 3. View looking south (2009 Assessor photo).

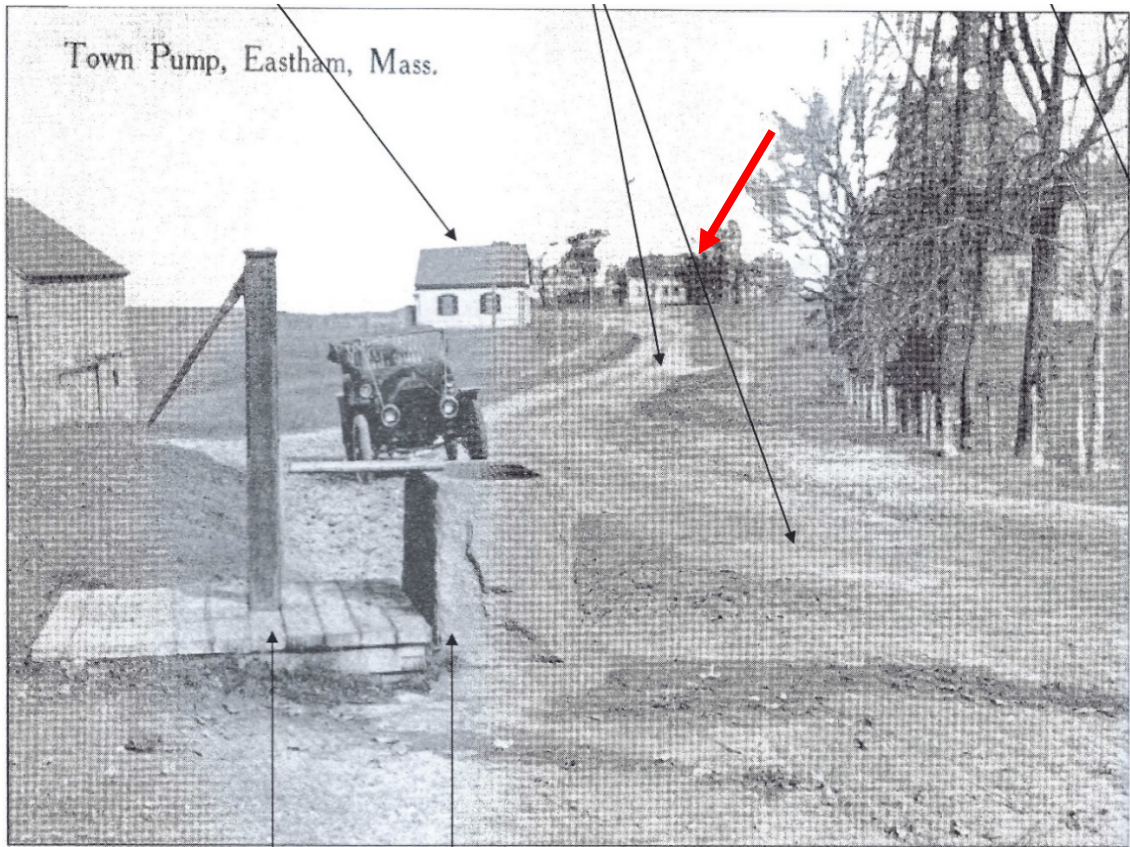


Photo 4. View looking north, red arrow to 3070 State Highway added (Source: Samoset Road-Cape Cod-USA).

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

3070 STATE HIGHWAY

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

G

EAS.1326

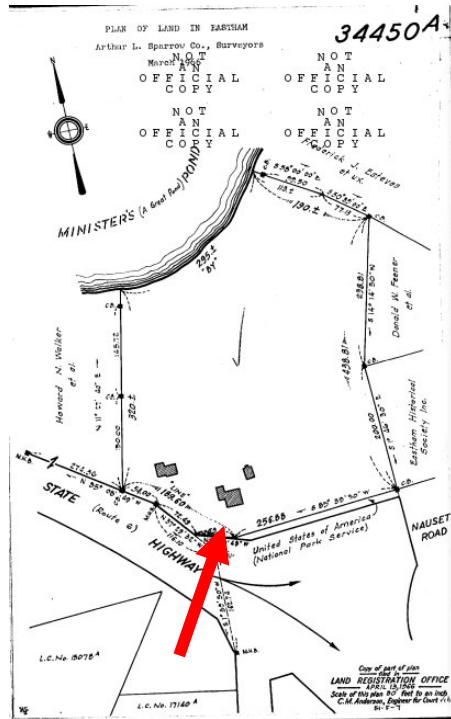


Figure 2. LCP 34450-A, 1966.
(Arrows to house added.)

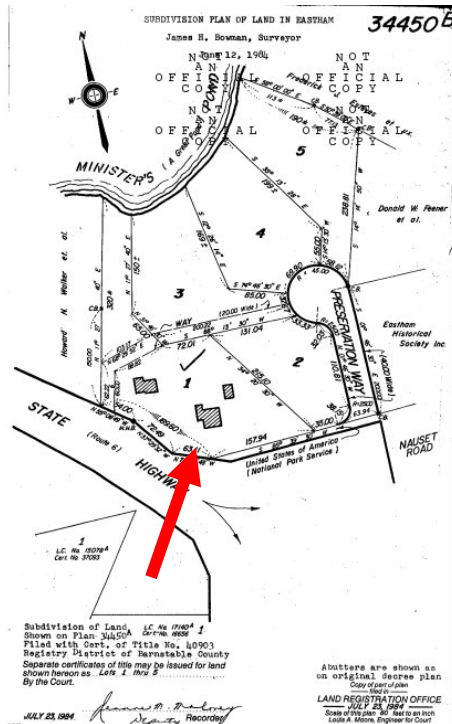


Figure 3. LCP 34450-B, 1984.

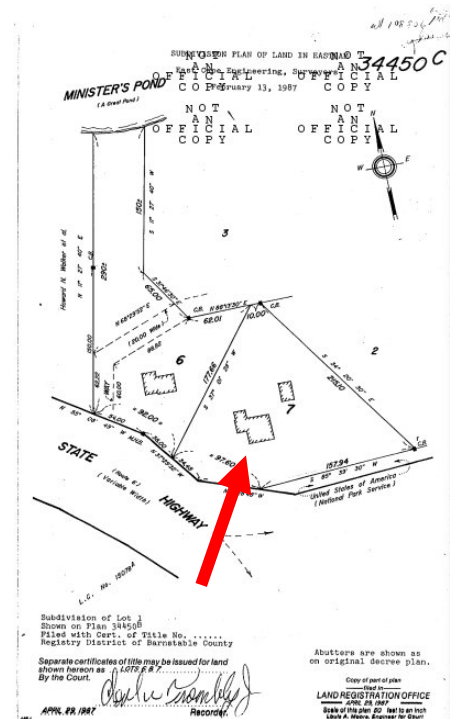


Figure 4. LCP 34450-C, 1987.